



# **MCAS Pre-Administration Guide for the Spring 2017 Grades 3–8 Computer-Based Tests**

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This document was prepared by the  
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
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Commissioner

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## Important Contact Information and Resources

### Test Administration Information and Online Services

#### MCAS Service Center

Telephone: **800-737-5103 (7:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday–Friday)**

Web: [mcas.pearsonsupport.com](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com) for training modules and other materials to support administration. The website is not currently online; it is expected to be available in late January.

Email: [mcas@measuredprogress.org](mailto:mcas@measuredprogress.org)

Fax: **877-325-4421**

### MCAS Policy Information

#### MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Student Assessment Services Office

Web: [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/?section=g3-8](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/?section=g3-8)

Email: [mcas@doe.mass.edu](mailto:mcas@doe.mass.edu)

Telephone: **781-338-3625**

Fax: **781-338-3630**

Questions regarding Student Information Management System (SIMS) data should be directed to the [district's SIMS contact](#). Select **SIMS Contact** from the Function menu, and click **Get Results**.

## Important Information about Online Accounts and Passwords

Type of Account	Purpose	How Login Information Is Provided
<b>PearsonAccess Next (PAN;</b> <a href="http://mcas.pearsonaccessnext.com">mcas.pearsonaccessnext.com</a> )	<p>All schools will use PAN to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Register students for tests, including paper-based test materials orders</li> <li>• Upload selected accessibility features and accommodations for each student</li> </ul> <p>CBT schools will also do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and manage test sessions</li> <li>• Monitor online testing activities</li> </ul>	<p>In late January, the Department will create initial accounts for superintendents, principals, school and district test coordinators, technology directors, based on information in <a href="#">ESE School and District Profiles</a>. Additional accounts should be managed at the district or school level.</p>
<b>PearsonAccess Next training site</b> ( <a href="http://trng-mcas.pearsonaccessnext.com">trng-mcas.pearsonaccessnext.com</a> )	<p>CBT schools will use the training site to run their Infrastructure Trial and to give access to users for practice prior to testing.</p>	<p>Users will receive passwords for the training site around the same time as logins for the live site (see above). If a user has an account in the PAN live site as well as the PAN training site, the password for both sites will always match.</p>
<b>MCAS Service Center</b> ( <a href="http://mcasservicecenter.com">mcasservicecenter.com</a> )	<p>All schools will use the MCAS Service Center website to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Order additional materials (i.e., manuals)</li> <li>• Complete the Principal's Certification of Proper Test Administration (PCPA) form</li> </ul>	<p>Use the secure password mailed by the Service Center in early January 2017 to access the PCPA.</p> <p>Use the MP Ship Code printed on the Materials Summary form to order additional materials.</p>

## Testing Schedule and Administration Deadlines

Spring 2017 MCAS Tests for Elementary and Middle Schools Grades 3–8 ELA and Mathematics computer-based tests (CBT) and paper-based tests (PBT); Grades 5 and 8 STE tests		
		Date/Time
<i>Before Testing for CBT</i>	Complete the Student Registration/Personal Needs Profile (SR/PNP) process	January 23–February 10
	Receive test administration manuals	March 20
	Conduct Infrastructure Trials on the PearsonAccess Next training site, including downloading ProctorCache software (strongly recommended, particularly for schools that did not do PARCC CBT in spring 2016)	Early February
	Precache operational test content for spring 2017 testing	Operational test content will be available for precaching on or around March 20, but schools should not precache until two weeks prior to the start of their testing window.
	Complete PCPA (Before Testing section) Order additional manuals, if necessary	March 20–30, 12:00 p.m.
<i>Before Testing for PBT</i>	Complete the Student Registration/Personal Needs Profile (SR/PNP) process	January 23–February 10
	Receive test materials	March 20
	Complete PCPA (Before Testing section) Report packing discrepancies, if necessary Order additional materials, if necessary	March 20–30, 12:00 p.m.
<i>Test Administration</i> <sup>1</sup>	ELA test sessions	April 3–May 3 <sup>2</sup>
	Mathematics test sessions	April 4–May 26 <sup>3</sup>
	STE test sessions (grades 5 and 8)	April 5–May 26 <sup>3</sup>
<i>After Testing for CBT</i>	Update students' accommodations, if necessary Complete PCPA Mark students' tests complete, if necessary	May 4, 3:00 p.m. for ELA May 30, 3:00 p.m. for Math and STE
<i>After Testing for PBT</i>	Update students' accommodations, if necessary Complete PCPA Schedule UPS pickup	May 4, 3:00 p.m. for ELA May 30, 3:00 p.m. for Math and STE
	Deadline for UPS pickup	May 5 for ELA (April 28: Early pickup for ELA) May 31 for Math and STE (May 24: Early pickup for Math and STE)

<sup>1</sup> See pages 6–7 for the amount of time that each session is designed to be completed within, as well as other information on testing time.

<sup>2</sup> Make-up testing for students with extraordinary circumstances (i.e., students not able to participate in regularly scheduled sessions or make-up sessions) may be completed May 4.

<sup>3</sup> Make-up testing for students with extraordinary circumstances (i.e., students not able to participate in regularly scheduled sessions or make-up sessions) may be completed May 30.



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# Introduction

Next-generation MCAS tests will be delivered online for the first time this spring as part of the plan to implement computer-based tests for virtually all students across the Commonwealth by spring 2019. In order to manage computer-based tests and achieve a successful test administration, principals and test coordinators must learn new processes, and plan for new collaborations in their school buildings.

This guide provides information and timelines for tasks related to computer-based testing that will occur before school principals receive the *Principal's Administration Manual* (PAM). Schools that administered PARCC in 2016 may be familiar with some of these processes, but as there are new timelines and some new processes this school year, this guide contains important information for all schools.

We hope this guide is helpful to you and your test administration team. Please contact the Department at 781-338-3625 or [mcas@doe.mass.edu](mailto:mcas@doe.mass.edu) with any questions about this document.

## Tasks to Complete Now

### **1. Identify the test administration team and update information in School/District Profiles.**

Designate staff members for the roles of MCAS Test Coordinator (district- and school-level) and Educational Technology Director (district-level only), and update any inaccurate or outdated school contact information in the [ESE School and District Profiles](#). The Department will use the contact information in the Profiles to send important, time-sensitive updates throughout the school year, including the [Student Assessment Update](#).

Communicate these staff roles to your District Directory Administrator, who should update your [ESE School and District Profile](#). MCAS test sites, adult education programs, out-of-state schools, and SEIS-DYS programs should go online to [the EOE Information Technology web page](#) (select “District/School Information Update” as the subject) to submit your update (be sure to include your District and School Code).

It is important to note that there can be multiple staff members with the MCAS Test Coordinator role at both the district and school level. Also note that individuals previously listed as a PARCC test coordinator have now been assigned to the role of MCAS test coordinator. Any changes should be communicated via the methods above.

### **2. Become familiar with computer-based testing components.**

Principals, test coordinators, and technology coordinators should become familiar with the terminology describing the components of computer-based testing:

- **PearsonAccess Next (PAN)** is the online management system described on page 4.
- **TestNav** is the online test delivery platform for students.
- **Infrastructure trials:** An Infrastructure Trial is an opportunity for districts, schools, and students to prepare for computer-based testing by simulating test-day network use. The purpose is to identify any school or district logistical issues, and to confirm all testing devices are properly configured and ready for computer-based testing. More information can be found on page 8.
- **Proctor caching:** This software will be available to all schools as part of the TestNav delivery platform. Precaching is the process of loading (i.e., “caching”) test content locally to a designated proctor caching computer at a school. Precaching reduces test delays from network congestion



and provides students with a more seamless testing experience in the event of disruptions to Internet connectivity.

### **3. Review technology specifications and prepare the school's infrastructure.**

Technology directors and other school- and district-level staff should review the [technology specifications](#) in order to begin their planning for spring 2017 computer-based testing.

The technology requirements provide minimum and recommended specifications for computer hardware, devices, and security requirements; and suggest recommended levels of bandwidth that will support schools' instructional and assessment needs. Schools and districts are encouraged to use these guidelines to determine the suitability of existing computers as test-taking devices.

It is important to identify any gaps in technology capacity, including test-taking devices that do not meet technology specifications and potentially insufficient bandwidth and address those gaps. In addition to determining device readiness, it is also important to determine network readiness.

Please note that districts that administered computer-based PARCC assessments in spring 2016 will meet device specifications for spring 2017 MCAS computer-based testing but should take note of [changes](#) to supported operating system and browser specifications.

Districts administering computer-based tests for the first time may want to view a [computer-based testing device planner](#) intended to help determine the number of devices required for testing. Additional guidance on hardware considerations can be found in the Department's [presentation](#) on preparing for computer-based testing.

### **4. Review accessibility features for testing, and finalize accommodations for students with disabilities and English language learners.**

#### ***Accessibility Features for All Students and Accommodations for Students with Disabilities***

Review the Department's new [Accessibility and Accommodations Manual for the Spring 2017 MCAS Grades 3–8 Tests](#). The manual contains new accessibility features for all students that were previously considered accommodations and features available at the principal's discretion.

IEPs and 504 plans should be amended in cases where a student with a disability took MCAS in spring 2016 and cannot participate in computer-based testing in 2017, since this would not already be in the plan (for more information, see Appendix A of the [Accessibility and Accommodations Manual](#) for a comparison of accommodations from 2016 to 2017).

If a student participated in PARCC in spring 2016, the IEP or 504 plan may need to be amended as follows:

- PARCC was timed, but MCAS is untimed in spring 2017, so there is no need for an extended time accommodation.
- PARCC did not permit pre-approved graphic organizers and supplemental mathematics reference sheets, so these will need to be added to the plan if needed for spring 2017 MCAS.
- For PARCC, reading aloud the Mathematics test was an accessibility feature for all students, but for spring 2017 MCAS, it is only available to students with disabilities (and must be added to the plan if the accommodation is needed).

Schools should be aware of these new policies that may impact planning as well as the location of testing.

- The Department is not allowing schools to submit individualized graphic organizers or reference sheets for Department approval for MCAS grades 3–8 ELA and Mathematics tests this school year, so schools should plan to use these [pre-approved](#) ones.
- **Any student** may have a selected word or phrase read aloud on either the grades 3–8 MCAS **Mathematics** or **STE** tests as an accessibility feature (not ELA). A student can simply raise his or her hand and ask the test administrator to read the word quietly to the student. The student can be tested in a standard test administration setting.
- Students with disabilities taking computer-based tests who need the test read aloud as an accommodation will need to order a “text-to-speech” (TTS) edition of the computer-based test. This accommodation must be requested prior to testing in the Personal Needs Profile (see page 5). Students may also continue to receive the read-aloud accommodation provided by a human reader on the mathematics, ELA, and STE computer- or paper-based tests, provided the accommodation is listed in an approved IEP, or in a 504 plan. Grade 3–8 tests will no longer be available in the Kurzweil 3000 read-aloud format.

### *New Accommodations for ELLs*

Principals should become familiar with new accommodations available to ELLs (see page 25 of the [Accessibility and Accommodations Manual](#) for a list, including reading aloud and scribing Mathematics and STE tests). ELLs are also entitled to the accessibility features that are available to all students.

## Tasks to Complete This Winter

### **1. Participate in training.**

#### *Online training modules*

Online training modules (i.e., narrated slides) will be posted at [mcas.pearsonsupport.com](https://mcas.pearsonsupport.com) to prepare staff in computer-based administration tasks. Each module is planned to take approximately 15 minutes to view. The table below shows the expected dates that modules will be available.

Module	Expected to be available
• Infrastructure trials for technology coordinators	Late January
• Infrastructure trials for test coordinators	Late January
• Creating sessions	Late January
• Accessibility features and accommodations	Early February
• Updating the Personal Needs Profile (PNP)	Early February
• Sessions management	Late March
• Moving students between sessions	Late March

#### *Face-to-face and remote training sessions*

The Department will host remote sessions on February 13 and 14 to prepare principals and test coordinators in MCAS test security and administration protocols. Face-to-face sessions will be held on February 15 (Holyoke) and on February 16 (Marlborough).

The Department also plans to host conference call sessions in January focused on technology-related tasks. More information will be posted later this winter on the Department's new [Student Assessment Services training web page](#).

Registration information will sent via email and fax in early 2017.

## **2. Set up user accounts in PearsonAccess Next (PAN).**

### ***PearsonAccess Next (PAN) overview***

PearsonAccess Next is the online management system for principals, test coordinators, and technology coordinators to manage user accounts, manage student registration, and set up computer-based testing sessions. All districts should have at least one test coordinator and the educational technology director user account (note that the PAN role for the Educational Technology Director is "Technology Coordinator").

### ***PAN user accounts***

User accounts are granted to educators and administrators who require access to PAN. All user accounts are assigned to at least one organization (e.g., a school or district) and are associated with a username and email address.

The organization to which a user account belongs defines the level of data the user will be able to view and manage. Each user account has a set of permissions associated with it. A user can only access the data for his or her assigned organization(s) and the data for any organizations lower in the hierarchy (e.g., if the user account is assigned to a school, the user can only access data for that school; if the user account is assigned to a district, the user can access district data, as well as data for all the schools assigned to that district). See the [Guide to Importing Users into PearsonAccess Next](#) and the [User Role Matrix for PearsonAccess Next](#) for details.

In late January, the Department will create the initial accounts, based on information in [School and District Profiles](#), for superintendents, education technology directors, school principals, and test coordinators.

<a href="#">School and District Profiles</a> Role	PAN Role
Superintendent	District Test Coordinator
MCAS Test Coordinator (district level)	District Test Coordinator
Educational Technology Director (district level)	Technology Coordinator (district role)
Principal/MCAS Test Coordinator (school level)	Principal or School Test Coordinator
N/A	Test Administrator

After the initial upload, additional accounts can be created by the school or district for the appropriate staff members. Information on how to create and edit user accounts can be found in the [PearsonAccess Next User Guide](#). Updates to the District MCAS Test Coordinator role can only be made by the Department. Before [contacting](#) the Department to request an update, make sure that the person you wish to have this role is listed as an MCAS Test Coordinator in [ESE School and District Profiles](#) on the Department's website. All other user accounts should be created and managed at the district or school level.

### **3. Import Student Registration/Personal Needs Profile (SR/PNP) files, and verify and update student names and information.**

The SR/PNP is a collection of student-level data that includes school and district name, student demographics, test registration information, and information on *selected* accommodations and/or accessibility features that a student may need for testing. The accuracy of the SR/PNP is important because it provides a record of accommodations and accessibility features used by students, and is the basis for the shipment of paper test materials to schools for the initial order (e.g., test administration manuals, test booklets, answer booklets, large-print booklets, read-aloud kits). The SR/PNP also determines the test form for students who will be taking a computer-based test.

To help schools and districts prepare for spring 2017 MCAS test administration, the Department will import information into PAN for students in grades 3–8 based on October 2016 SIMS and students' most recent test accommodation information. See the schedule on page iii for completing the SR/PNP.

Specifically, the following data will be imported into PAN by the Department:

- all students enrolled in your school as of October 1, 2016
- test accommodations from spring 2016 MCAS or PARCC for students with disabilities currently in grades 4–8

Schools should update student registration (SR) information as follows:

- Add students who enrolled after October 1 (for both SIF and non-SIF districts).
- Remove students who are no longer enrolled in your school.
- Change a student's assigned test only if a student's grade is listed incorrectly (The student's grade will also need to be updated in the March SIMS submission.)
- Add session names for students.

Students who participated in the MCAS Alternate Assessment in 2016 were not imported into PAN; these students will only need to be added to PAN if they will be taking the standard MCAS test in 2017.

Schools should update the PNP for the following groups of students:

- all grade 3 students who require selected accommodations and accessibility features
- students in grades 4–8 whose needs have changed since 2016, including ELL students who have test accommodations

### **4. Prepare the school community.**

#### ***Review technology skills with students.***

Principals should review the Department's Office of Digital Learning [resources](#), which includes a list of technology tools and skills that students will need to be successful in an online testing environment.

Additionally, schools should ensure that the curriculum incorporates digital learning in all content areas. Administrators may want to refer to the recently adopted [2016 Massachusetts Digital Literacy and Computer Science \(DLCS\) Curriculum Framework](#).

#### ***View the student tutorial and practice tests.***

The Department will be making a number of resources available at [mcas.pearsonsupport.com](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com) for student practice in early 2017. It is expected that schools review them with students to familiarize them with the tools and features that will be available during testing.

Student tutorials will demonstrate the navigation, tools, and features available during the computer-based assessment. It may be helpful for educators to review the tutorials with students before the students complete the tutorials independently. It is strongly recommended that sufficient time be scheduled before testing for students to view these tutorials in order for them to feel comfortable with the items and tools.

Practice tests will be available for students for CBT that will include accessibility features, as well as special editions for students using text-to-speech, Braille, and large print. These practice tests are intended to help familiarize students with the tools and features found on the online system, as well as used for test simulation practice in the classroom.

***Prepare parents/guardians for expectations for 2017 testing.***

You may want to refer to the sample talking points in the appendix to use during a school open house, or make adjustments to it to meet your school's needs and then send it to parents/guardians in a regular school email newsletter.

***5. Familiarize yourself with test administration policies that are different from those of the spring 2016 MCAS test administration.***

Below are policies that will be different from the spring 2016 MCAS test administration that will require a change in scheduling and materials that schools will need to provide for students. Additional information on these, as well as other changes, will be described in the PAM.

***Testing Schedule***

The schedule for testing and administration deadlines is provided in this document on page iii, and details on the updates below can be found in the [posted version of the schedule](#).

New for 2017, since ELA and Mathematics test sessions will be longer than prior years', schools may plan for one short, supervised break per session (3–5 minutes) to be given at each test administrator's discretion (further guidance will be given in the PAM).

Also new for 2017, CBT sessions are not expected to adhere to the concurrent testing requirement. Sessions should be scheduled as close together as possible to maintain test security.

While planning ahead, please be advised that students should complete testing for each session using only one testing device, in order to minimize the potential for problems. This means that a student who is expected to take longer than other students to complete a session should continue testing, for example, in a school's computer lab, even if other students arrive to take a different test session (the PAM will contain additional information).

<b>Spring 2017 Grades 3–8 MCAS ELA Tests</b>				
<b>Gr.</b>	<b>Session 1 recommended testing time</b>	<b>Session 2 recommended testing time</b>	<b>Session 3 recommended testing time</b>	<b>Total recommended testing time</b>
<b>3</b>	60	60	45	<b>165</b>
<b>4</b>	60	60	45	<b>165</b>
<b>5</b>	60	75	45	<b>180</b>
<b>6</b>	110	100	NA	<b>210</b>
<b>7</b>	110	100	NA	<b>210</b>
<b>8</b>	110	100	NA	<b>210</b>

Spring 2017 Grades 3–8 MCAS Mathematics Tests			
Gr.	Session 1 recommended testing time	Session 2 recommended testing time	Total recommended testing time
3	65	65	130
4	70	70	140
5	70	70	140
6	70	70	140
7	70	70	140
8	70	70	140

Spring 2017 Grades 5 and 8 MCAS STE Tests			
Gr.	Session 1 recommended testing time	Session 2 recommended testing time	Total recommended testing time
5	45	45	90
8	45	45	90

### ***Materials Required/Permitted during Computer-based Testing***

The following materials are **required** to be provided for student use during testing:

- scratch paper
  - Test administrators must supply at least one sheet of unused scratch paper (blank, lined, or graph) for each student. Students can request more scratch paper, if needed.

The following materials **may** be used by students:

- headphones for [students with disabilities using certain accommodations](#)

### ***Tools Embedded in the Computer-based Test for Students***

#### ***Reference Sheets and Rulers***

Students taking the computer-based Mathematics test have reference sheets (grades 5–8) and rulers (grades 3–8) embedded in the student testing platform that will be available during testing. Students have access to two separate rulers: a centimeter ruler and a 1/8-inch ruler. Students may not use handheld rulers on the computer-based test.

Schools may provide printed reference sheets to students in grades 5–8 who prefer to use them instead of the online version. Reference sheets for computer-based schools may be printed from [the Department's website](#) (printed copies are not available for ordering).

#### ***Calculators for Computer-Based Testing***

- **Grades 7 and 8:** Students taking the computer-based test have a calculator embedded in the student testing platform that will be available during the calculator session. Students who prefer to use handheld calculators may use one during testing that is an equivalent version to the one that is provided in the student testing platform, as described below.
  - Grade 7 Mathematics **Session 2 only:** a five-function calculator (i.e., a four-function calculator with a square root key)
  - Grade 8 Mathematics **Session 2 only:** a scientific calculator

# Tasks to Complete in Late Winter/Early Spring

## ***1. Plan for CBT testing spaces.***

Computer-based testing brings additional considerations for creating a secure testing environment. Because the screens on most testing devices are vertical, it is much easier for students to see each other's tests than in a paper-based testing environment where testing materials are generally kept flat on desks. Thus, a separation between desks that is appropriate for paper-based testing may not be adequate for CBT. The following are strategies to create a secure environment in testing rooms. However the room is arranged, students must not have a view of any screen but their own.

- Seat students at least two seats away from each other.
- Arrange monitors back-to-back
- Seat students back-to-back
- Seat students in a wide semi-circle
- Seat students in every other row

Physical barriers can also be used:

- Tri-fold display boards around testing devices
- Cardboard or heavy cardstock placed on desks or taped to the sides of monitors to create a barrier
- Partitions between students sitting at the same table

After deciding how they intend to maintain a secure testing environment for CBT, schools should set up a room and confirm that no students will be able to view other students' screens.

## ***2. Conduct an Infrastructure Trial (strongly recommended, particularly for schools that did not do PARCC computer-based testing in spring 2016).***

### ***Infrastructure Trial overview***

An Infrastructure Trial is a simulated test administration, using the PearsonAccess Next [training site](#) and TestNav to ensure that students, staff, and technology resources are ready for the computer-based assessment. The Infrastructure Trial can help identify—in advance—potential issues that may interfere with a successful online test administration. The Trial also introduces students to the TestNav testing environment and allows them to practice navigating the secure online interface using sample grade and subject tests.

### ***Main steps***

- Set up and configure the test management and test delivery environment.
- Generate sample students and create test sessions.
- Administer practice tests to students.
- Conduct follow-up activities.

An infrastructure trial guide containing step-by-step instructions will be available in late January.



## **Appendix: What should parents know about the next-generation MCAS tests?**

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) is in the process of upgrading the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests to better measure the critical thinking skills students need for success in the 21st century. The new tests, informally called “the next-generation MCAS,” will build on the best aspects of MCAS that have served the Commonwealth well for the past two decades.

### ***Why is Massachusetts changing to these next-generation tests?***

The MCAS tests were first administered in 1998 and had been given for 18 years, mostly unchanged. However, the MCAS was not designed to measure readiness for success in college or a career after high school. Data from our state higher education system showed a high number of students requiring remedial courses. And, as we upgraded our learning expectations through revising the curriculum frameworks, it was time to upgrade our state tests. The next-generation tests provide an opportunity for added focus on critical thinking skills and factual knowledge.

### ***What is the phase-in plan for computer-based testing?***

As part of the [transition to statewide computer-based testing](#), students in grades 4 and 8 are expected to take computer-based MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics tests in spring 2017, with exceptions for students who are determined to require a paper-and-pencil edition or the MCAS-Alt, and a small number of districts with exceptional circumstances. (Districts were able to apply for a waiver from the expectation for computer-based testing for grades 4 and 8, and decisions will be communicated back to superintendents by December 23.) In addition, districts may choose to administer ELA and Mathematics tests on computer for grades 3, 5, 6, and 7 this spring.

In spring 2017, the Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) tests at grades 5, 8, and high school, and the grade 10 ELA and Mathematics tests and retests will remain paper-based tests.

It is expected that districts will administer more grades and subjects on computer in spring 2018, and the goal is for full computer-based testing in spring 2019 for grades 3–8 ELA and Mathematics with exceptions for students with disabilities who require a paper-and-pencil test as well as for new ELL students unfamiliar with computers. Science and Technology/Engineering tests will move to computer-based testing on a different schedule.

### ***How are the next-generation tests different from traditional MCAS tests?***

- Next-generation tests are designed to assess students’ critical thinking skills, as well as signal students’ readiness for success in college or a career after high school.
- Next-generation tests will include existing MCAS questions, questions developed by the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), and new questions developed specifically for the new test.
- Next-generation tests will primarily be computer-based tests. Computer-based test questions can include richer content and a greater range of accessibility features; tests have the potential to be scored more quickly and at a lower cost; and computer-based testing reflects the reality that students in the 21st century are using technology in their classrooms and their daily lives.
- Next-generation tests will include writing on the ELA test in every grade; in the past, MCAS tests included a separate composition test in grades 4, 7, and 10 only. (Note that students in grade 10 in 2017 will continue to take the Composition test.)



### ***Will I need to buy a computer for my child to be tested?***

No. Computers or tablets will be provided by schools. In preparation, the ESE is providing information to schools regarding funding opportunities to upgrade their technology.

### ***How much time will students spend taking the next-generation tests?***

- Next-generation tests will remain untimed in spring 2017, and the ESE plans to study the amount of time that students actually use to plan for 2018 accordingly.
- The recommended amount of time for each session will be slightly longer than during the spring 2016 MCAS tests, but shorter than the spring 2016 PARCC tests (which were timed). The recommended session lengths are [posted on the Department's website](#).

### ***How will students with disabilities and ELL students participate in the next-generation tests?***

- The universal design of the next-generation tests is intended to reduce barriers to participation for all students, including students with disabilities. New accessibility and accommodations policies will also increase accessibility for these students.
- Students with disabilities will continue using accommodations that are documented in approved IEPs and 504 plans, and now ELL students will also be eligible for test accommodations.
- Students with severe disabilities will continue to be able to participate in the MCAS Alternate Assessment instead of the standard test.

### ***What will the next-generation tests assess?***

The spring 2017 next-generation tests will be based on the same learning standards as the traditional MCAS tests – those contained in the [Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks](#), which outline what students should know and be able to do for each grade level and subject area.

### ***Will my child be able to review sample next-generation test questions before testing?***

Yes. The ESE plans to post practice tests as well as student tutorials online in early 2017 for schools to practice with students.

### ***How will parents and educators know how students perform on the next-generation tests?***

Student performance will be reported using the same process as the traditional MCAS tests: students will receive a scaled score and an achievement level for each next-generation test they take. These results will be included on reports for parents/guardians.

### ***Where can parents/guardians find more information or get involved?***

- ESE welcomes input from parents, guardians, and other community stakeholders. You can email your comments to the [Office of Student Assessment Services](#).
- See below for the tests your child will take this coming spring.

Student's name

Grade

Contact if questions

ELA test dates & testing mode (computer or paper)

Mathematics test dates & testing mode (computer or paper)

STE test dates (grades 5 and 8 only, and paper only)